From the Desk of Fr. Leo

Over and over again we are reminded by the prophets of Israel that God is the great deliverer. The prophet Jeremiah is wonderfully graphic in one of the texts this Sunday. It is the Lord who preserves a remnant of Israel. It is the Lord who gathers the scattered and then escorts them home. It is the Lord who comforts their sorrow and watches them on the way. It is the Lord who makes the path straight and safe. It is the Lord who makes the land fat and the garden fruitful and fills the people with plenty. And the Lord does all of that without any help. So the prophet Isaiah declares it. It was no envoy, no angel, but the Lord who delivered them. It is the Lord who acts for us through all the years gone by. That is what we believe. That we have to announce to the nations. That is the promise by which we live, God acts for us. Directly, God is pictured as the active one, who intervenes on our behalf.

The story of the birth of Jesus gives a similar picture. God is the actor. God announces to Mary and to the shepherds a birth for which God is responsible. God guides the three astrologers (the Magi) and warns Joseph to flee to Egypt with Mary and the Child. Never mind that an angel is the envoy. The message is the same. God is acting for the sake of the world.

It is very important to the evangelist Matthew that we understand how the birth of Jesus is part of God's great plan of deliverance. And God continues to watch over the Holy Family in the midst of forces that threaten the life of the Child Jesus. In response to those warnings from the Great Deliverer, Joseph leads his little family to safety in Egypt and from Egypt to Nazareth. From the beginning of the birth story to the end, the picture is the same. God acts to save God's people.

There are two actions in the story however. God delvers. But Joseph decides. That is the story of faith and our lives. Like the fragile Holy Family, our lives are held in the providential care of God. It is God's watchfulness that keeps us from harm. The God who delivered Israel out of Egypt and led the Holy Family to safety is the same God who rescues us from threatening peril. Deliverance is God's responsibility and not ours. And yet, like Joseph, we must decide and we must act. We must decide how to respond to what we perceive to be the plan of God.

The story of Christmas is not just about God's deliverance. It is also about our response. The innkeeper and the shepherds and the astrologers and Joseph, all had to make decisions about God's interventions. We must decide too. And yet we believe that no decision we make is final. Everything is provisional in the light of God's providence.

Fr. Leo Alban Asuncion

Mass Intentions for the Week

Tues.	**January 2**	**11:00AM**
Ed & Mae (anniversary)		
Wed.	**January 3**	**11:00AM**
Thanksgiving		Alma & Jong
Thur.	**January 4**	**11:00AM**
Flora Orsi †		ICF#14
Fri.	**January 5**	**11:00AM**
Ed & Mae		
Sat.	**January 6**	**4:30PM**
Thomas Wolthuis †		Roxene
Sun.	**January 7**	**9:00AM**
Jorge, Tomasa, José & Manuel †		Delgado Family
Port Costa		**11:00AM**
People of the Parish		

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